



Schmitt Named Farm and Rural Services Bureau Director

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MADISON – Kathy Schmitt has been named the new Bureau Director of the Farm and Rural Services at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). Previously, Schmitt was a Community Services Specialist in the Bureau.

“Kathy Schmitt has been an instrumental team member of DATCP for almost twenty years focusing her work on assisting farmers,” said Mike Powers, DATCP’s Division Administrator of Agricultural Development. “I am proud to announce she will now hold this leadership position to further support Wisconsin’s farmers and rural communities.”

As the Bureau Director, Schmitt will lead the Wisconsin Farm Center, which provides assistance to beginning, distressed and transitioning farmers to meet their families’ economic and social needs. Schmitt will also oversee the Rural Electric Power Services Team that addresses stray voltage problems and offers related herd health diagnostic services.



Kathy Schmitt is the new Bureau Director of Farm and Rural Services at DATCP.

“I am delighted to be working with this staff who has the talent and passion to serve Wisconsin farmers and agribusinesses,” said Schmitt. “I look forward to building additional relationships in the agricultural community, identifying challenges and developing programs to meet emerging needs.”

Schmitt grew up on her family’s dairy and beef farm in the Beaver Dam area. She received her bachelor’s degree in rehabilitation education and her master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Before coming to DATCP, Schmitt worked for a women’s career agency assisting displaced homemakers as well as a rehabilitation psychologist and expert witness in private practice. Schmitt now resides on a farm in Fitchburg and raises draft horses.

While at DATCP, Schmitt has developed risk management programs for underserved farmers. She has developed workshops and trainings for Hmong growers to teach financial management, including crop planning and income and expense recording, to make their farming operations profitable. Schmitt has also worked to provide support to women farmers to build their business skills and confidence.

Schmitt has been involved in developing behavioral health services for farm families, including a counseling voucher program. She helped to bring the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program to Wisconsin as well as the AmeriCorp Farm to School program. Schmitt began her civil service by helping farmers in transition enter into training or job seeking programs. Currently Schmitt serves on the Rural Health Development Council, Wisconsin Rural Partners Board, Universal Service Fund Council and Wisconsin Rural Women’s Initiative Board on behalf of DATCP.

Schmitt begins her duties effective February 27, 2012. She replaces Paul Dietmann, who left DATCP at the end of 2011 to take a position at Badgerland Financial.

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